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OPENING STATEMENT FOR EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE NOMINATIONS  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Good morning. My name is Kathleen O'Connor. I am a resident of West Hartford, Connecticut where I have lived with my husband and our four children for almost ten years.

I would like to begin by thanking the Chairpersons – Senator Looney and Representative Janowoski, the Ranking Members – Senator McKinney and Representative Piscopo and the other members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee for your time today. I would also like to thank Governor Rell for putting my name into nomination to become of member of the State Board of Education.

I had the pleasure of growing up as the fourth of six children in Tarrytown, NY. From a very young age my parents instilled in me the importance of education. I am a graduate of Georgetown University, the University College of London where I received a Masters in Research in Psychology and Fordham University School of Law. After graduating law school, I had the privilege of clerking for Honorable Thomas J. Meskill on the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

I entered the profession of law in private practice at Plunkett & Jaffe, P.C., a New York law firm and went on to work in the Office of Legal Counsel for Governor John G. Rowland. After two years in the Governor's Office I returned to private practice at Plunkett & Jaffe and almost three years ago our firm merged with a national law firm, McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP.

In addition to my law practice I currently serve as a Trustee at the Wadsworth Museum of Art and as a member of the Judicial Selection Commission.

My husband and I have four children ages 3-7 and are active in their extracurricular activities. Two of our children attend Duffy Elementary School in West Hartford. Our younger two children are in preschool at the School for Young Children at St. Joseph's College.

I am honored to be asked to serve on the State Board of Education because I believe that the greatest investment that we, as citizens of the State of Connecticut, can make for our future is in the education of our children. As a parent, I recognize the importance of families and communities working with schools to contribute to the success of Connecticut's students. The importance of maintaining high standards for our students

and our teachers and working cooperatively to close the large achievement gap in our State are critical issues that we need to address.

Although the entire nation is facing very difficult economic challenges, the importance of ensuring that the students of Connecticut continue to receive the resources necessary to be prepared to compete in the global marketplace is essential. I look forward to working as a member of the State Board of Education to tackle many of these difficult challenges we face and to work to ensure that every child in Connecticut is afforded a first-rate educational opportunity.

Thank you all again for your time and attention and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.